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ABSTRACT

This bulletin examines manifestations of street violence (bullying, gangs, weapons possession and use, substance abuse, and community violence) threatening schools and describes steps that concerned citizens are taking to restore security and calm. Schoolyard bullying can be mitigated by widely publicized rules, buddy systems, parent education programs, student behavior programs, and programs such as the "No Bullying Program" and "Bully-Proofing Your School." Strategies for dealing with intimidating youth gangs include training programs, dress codes, and alternative schools. Another strategy is to implement programs such as Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach. Weapon usage can be prevented by passing state and local gun-free-school zones legislation, enforcing the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act, using metal detectors, removing hall lockers, and initiating public awareness campaigns and community partnerships. Increased substance abuse can be tackled by creating drug-free zones, involving parents, and initiating drug resistance training, critical thinking curricula such as "AdSmarts," and cooperative programs such as the "Adolescent Social Action Program." To combat fear of neighborhood violence, most states have developed safe-school-zone statutes and zero-tolerance policies. Schools are forging partnerships with court and probation officials, formulating crisis prevention/intervention policies, and developing security aids and supervised travel routes. Included are 49 endnotes, an article on bullying by Susan P. Limber and Maury M. Nation, and numerous sidebars. (MLH)

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OJJDP
Shay Bilchik, Administrator
April 1998
JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools

June L. Arnette and Marjorie C. Walsleben

The topic of this Bulletin is the national effort to reach youth who are absent or truant from school because of school-associated fear and intimidation. The ongoing series of OJJDP Bulletins that centers on reaching these youth is part of the Youth Out of the Education Mainstream (YOEM) initiative, a joint effort of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, U.S. Department of Education. The YOEM initiative focuses on at-risk youth who are truant, dropouts, fearful of attending school, suspended or expelled, or in need of help reintegrating into mainstream schools from juvenile detention and correctional settings. Each Bulletin in this series highlights one of these five separate but often related categories of problems that cause youth to forsake their education and thus place themselves at risk of delinquency.

Little more than half a century ago, when the United States faced challenging times, an American president warned the country's citizens that they had nothing to fear but fear itself. Once again, the country faces a threat: the invasion of safe havens for youth—its schools—by community violence and its concomitant, fear.

This Bulletin deals with some manifestations of street violence that have encroached on schools, territory formerly thought to be inviolate: bullying, gangs, the possession and use of weapons, substance abuse, and violence in the community. It documents the concern that educators, parents, students—citizens in general—have expressed. The Bulletin also outlines strategies and describes programs that reveal that these same citizens are working vigorously in creative partnerships to revitalize schools and make them safer.

Public Opinion

Television news programs, daily newspapers, government reports, and results of public polls bombard citizens regularly with accounts of assaults, sex crimes, robberies, murders, and vandalism, and with the public response to such crime. This bombardment could feed the fear that much of the public already feels. However, in 1996, the juvenile arrest rate for murder was at its lowest level since the beginning of the decade.[1] A 1996 analysis of juvenile homicides examined where such crimes occurred and found that 56 percent of the country's juvenile homicide arrests were made in six States and that four large metropolitan centers (containing only 5.3 percent of the Nation's juvenile population) accounted for 30 percent of such arrests.[2] Nonetheless, the media have helped engender widespread fear

From the Administrator

Thoreau once wrote in his journal that "nothing is so much to be feared as fear." For many school-age children, however, fear is a realistic response to conditions in and around their schools. The adverse effects of this fear are far reaching and often long lasting. When fear keeps children out of the classroom, it can limit their prospects and their potential contributions to society.

America was founded on the promise of opportunity. Every child in our Nation deserves the chance to live the American dream, and education is the pathway to that dream and to a fulfilling and productive life. We must not allow fears engendered by bullying, gangs, weapons, and substance abuse to disrupt children's journey toward a better tomorrow.

Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools examines the climate of violence that threatens our schools and describes steps that concerned citizens are taking to restore security and calm. Because our children look to us to make their world safe, we must all become advocates for prevention and intervention programs such as those profiled here. I hope that this Bulletin will encourage you to support efforts to eliminate the fear that plagues too many of our schools.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

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National data regarding rates of actual victimization at school are not available. Schools and school districts currently are not required to report incidents of school crime and violence to any one national agency. National information that is available regarding student victimization is usually based on surveys that poll a representative sample of students (and educators) about their own experiences and often about their perceptions of the violence experienced by others at school. These results are often then generalized to apply to the total population. However, a trend is developing toward standardizing incident reporting on State and local levels. This trend will help refine, expand, and update data regarding school crime and violence and will help to target limited resources to address issues of student victimization and school crime and violence.

that violent acts are taking an unacceptable toll on the lives, education, and opportunities of many young people in this country.

A 1993 national school-based survey that polled a representative sample of high school students showed that students' fear for their personal safety at school or traveling to or from school compelled as many as 4.4 percent of responding students to miss a day of school each month.[1] Of the respondents to a 1996 national random telephone survey of more than 1,300 high school students, nearly half of those in public high schools reported drugs and violence as serious problems in their schools.[4] Data from a fall 1993 national survey polling 1,000 teachers and 1,180 students in grades 3 through 12 revealed that 23 percent of the responding students and 11 percent of the responding teachers had been victims of violence in and around schools.[5]

In addition to fearing personal victimization, many students also feel fear in response to violence experienced by other students. For example, in August 1993, *USA WEEKEND* published an unscientific survey, the results of which were based on the written answers of 65,193 students (6th through 12th graders) who responded individually or as class members. Sixty-three percent reported that they would learn more at school if they felt safer; 43 percent avoided restrooms; 20 percent avoided hallways; and 45 percent avoided the school grounds.[6] In a recent survey sponsored by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, nearly one-fourth of students in grades 7 through 12 reported that their schools had very serious problems regarding social tension and violence. These problems were measured by students reporting the occurrence on their campuses of specific behaviors, such as hostile or threatening remarks between groups of students, threats or destructive acts other than physical fights, turf battles between groups of students, physical fights among groups of friends, and gang violence.[7]

Not only are many students afraid to attend school, but many parents and citizens in general also express concern for children's safety at school. A 1994 national survey of parents of public school 3d through 12th graders indicated that 40 percent of parents of high school students were "very or somewhat worried" about their child's safety while in school or going to and from school.[8] The National League of Cities surveyed 700 communities nationwide, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. Results of that 1994 survey revealed that 80 percent of the respondents said violence was a serious problem in classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds; 40 percent reported that violence in schools had increased noticeably during the past 5 years. In addition, 25 percent of the schools participating in the survey reported that in the previous year, students had died or suffered injuries requiring hospitalization as a result of violence.[9]

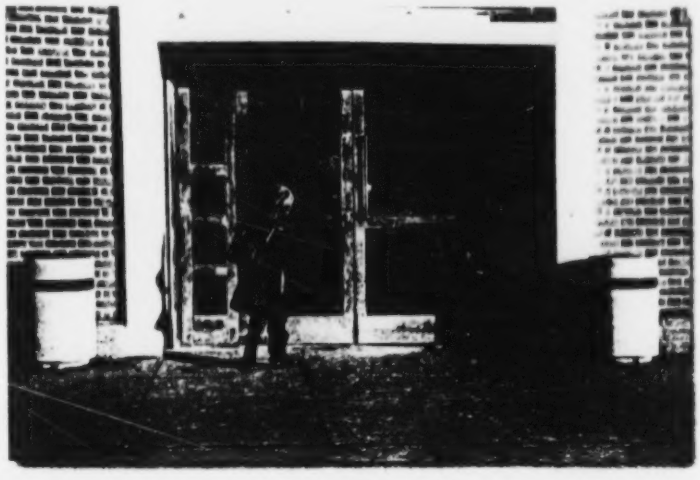
Invasive Violence

A community's manifestations of street violence—bullying, gangs, the possession and use of weapons, substance abuse, and violence in the community—could be a direct cause of the decline in educational opportunity. These manifestations cause students to be fearful of going to school. Both the topics and the promising strategies reported at the end of each section represent an overview developed by staff at the National School Safety Center (NSSC), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. The strategies suggested are a distillation of information gathered from NSSC's work on the Youth Out of the Education Mainstream initiative and school site assessments, examinations of curriculums, consultations with experts and youth-serving professionals in the field, and surveys of topical articles published in government reports, periodicals, newspapers, and the NSSC publications *School Safety* and *School Safety Update*.

Bullying

The acts of violence featured in headlines are not the only concerns on today's school grounds. Age-old "lesser" forms of violence are also widespread in and near schools. Among the problems confronting students and schools is bullying—the more insidious and fear inducing because of its commonplace occurrence at school and away from the notice of adults.

In this country, bullying has traditionally been viewed as some perverse sort



of child's play, its occurrence usually eliciting the common phrase, "Kids will be kids." Today, bullying is rightfully being recognized for what it is: an abusive behavior that often leads to greater and prolonged violent behavior. This phenomenon is more accurately termed "peer child abuse." Schoolyard bullying, which occurs in kindergarten through 12th grade, spans many different behaviors—from what some may call minor offenses to the more serious criminal acts. Name calling, fistfights, purposeful ostracism, extortion, character assassination, libel, repeated physical attacks, and sexual harassment all are bullying tactics.

In May 1987, international authorities on schoolyard bullies and victims gathered at Harvard University for a Schoolyard Bully Practicum, which was sponsored by NSSC in conjunction with OJJDP. The practicum was one of the first meetings of prominent researchers, psychologists, school and law enforcement authorities, and public relations practitioners for the purpose of developing an awareness and prevention program to address bullying in the United States.

The following list of services, strategies, and suggested training classes were identified by practicum participants as ways to mediate bullying:

- Rules against bullying that are publicized, posted schoolwide, and accompanied by consistent sanctions.
- Student and adult mentors who assist victims and bullies to build self-esteem and to foster mutual understanding of and appreciation for differences in others.
- A buddy system that pairs students with a particular friend or older buddy with whom they share class schedule information and plans for the school day and on whom they can depend for help.
- An on-campus parents' center that recruits, coordinates, and encourages parents to take part in the educational process, volunteer, and assist in school activities and projects.
- Classes for adults in parenting skills and for students in anger management, assertiveness training, and behavior modification training.
- Behavior contracts signed by students and parents and written behavior codes for students, teachers, and staff members that are circulated to all parents and students.
- Emphasis on discipline that stresses right behavior instead of reprimands that focus on punishing wrong behavior.
- Friendship groups that support children who are regularly bullied by peers.
- Peer mediation programs and teen courts that train students to mediate problems among themselves.
- Conflict and dispute resolution curriculums available in all grades.
- Close monitoring of cafeterias, playgrounds, and "hot spots" where bullying is likely to occur away from direct adult supervision.
- Cooperative classroom activities and learning tasks, with care taken to vary the grouping of participants and to monitor groups for balanced reception and treatment of participants.
- Classroom and schoolwide activities designed to build self-esteem by spotlighting special talents, hobbies, interests, and abilities of all students.
- Publicity about organizations and groups that build children's social skills and self-discipline, such as the Boys' & Girls Clubs, Scouting, and junior cadet programs, and various disciplines such as yoga, tai chi chuan, jujitsu, karate, kung fu, and tae kwon do.

Both bullies and their victims need help in learning new ways to get along in school. Curriculum developers and publishers now offer a variety of prevention/intervention materials to eliminate bullying from school life. Three programs, highlighted in NSSC's *School Safety*, are outlined below.[10]

- **No Bullying program.**[11] This Johnson Institute program, first implemented last year in schools across the country, pinpoints the "tell or tattle" dilemma facing many victims of bullying. Teachers are given step-by-step guidelines on how to teach students the difference between telling and tattling. Teachers also are shown how to establish and use immediate consequences when dealing with bullies.

- **Bully-Proofing Your School.**[12] This program, available from Sopris West since 1994, uses a comprehensive approach. Key elements include conflict resolution training for all staff members, social skills building for victims, positive leadership skills training for bullies, intervention techniques for those who neither bully or are bullied, and the presence of parental support.
- **Second Step.**[13] The Committee for Children's Second Step curriculum teaches positive social skills to children and families, including skill building in empathy, impulse control, problem solving, and anger management. Initial results indicate that students are able to identify more often with other people's feelings and are more readily able to control anger.

In the effort to make schools and communities safer for children, it is important that educators, parents, and policymakers be encouraged to support schoolwide programs that address all forms of violence, including bullying and its organized manifestation, gangs.

Bullying Among Children and Youth

Susan P. Limber and Maury M. Nation

Recent research in the United States and abroad has documented that bullying is a common and potentially damaging form of violence among children. Not only does bullying harm both its intended victims and the perpetrators, it also may affect the climate of schools and, indirectly, the ability of all students to learn to the best of their abilities. Moreover, the link between bullying and later delinquent and criminal behavior cannot be ignored. Although studies of comprehensive antibullying programs are scarce in the United States, evaluation data from other countries suggest that adopting a comprehensive approach to reduce bullying at school can change students' behaviors and attitudes, reduce other antisocial behaviors, and increase teachers' willingness to intervene.

Stimulated by the pioneering work of Dan Olweus in Norway and Sweden, researchers from several nations—Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Japan, Norway, and the United States—have begun to explore the nature, prevalence, and effects of bullying among school children. Their findings provide compelling reasons for initiating interventions to prevent bullying. Its high prevalence among children, its harmful and frequently enduring effects on victims, and its chilling effects on school climate are significant reasons for prevention and early intervention efforts in schools and communities.

The phenomenon of bullying deserves special attention by educators, parents, and children concerned with violence prevention for two significant reasons. First, the prevalence of bullying and the harm that it causes are seriously underestimated by many children and adults. It is critical that any violence prevention strategy work to raise the awareness of children, school staff, and parents regarding the link between bullying and other violent behaviors.

Second, the nature of bullying does not necessarily lend itself to the same interventions that may effectively reduce other types of conflict among children. Because it involves harassment by powerful children against children with less power (rather than a conflict between peers of relatively equal status), common conflict resolution strategies such as mediation may not be effective.

Definition

Bullying among children is understood as repeated, negative acts committed by one or more children against another. These negative acts may be physical or verbal in nature—for example, hitting or kicking, teasing or taunting—or they may involve indirect actions such as manipulating friendships or purposely excluding other children from activities. Implicit in this definition is an imbalance in real or perceived power between the bully and victim.

Intervention Model

The first and best-known intervention to reduce bullying among school children was launched by Olweus in Norway and Sweden in the early 1980's. Inspired by the suicides of several severely victimized children, Norway supported the development and implementation of a comprehensive program to address bullying among children in school. The program involved interventions at multiple levels:

- **Schoolwide interventions.** A survey of bullying problems at each school, increased supervision, schoolwide assemblies, and teacher inservice training to raise the awareness of children and school staff regarding bullying.
- **Classroom-level interventions.** The establishment of classroom rules against bullying, regular class meetings to discuss bullying at school, and meetings with all parents.
- **Individual-level interventions.** Discussions with students identified as bullies and victims.

The program was found to be highly effective in reducing bullying and other antisocial behavior among students in primary and junior high schools. Within 2 years of implementation, both boys' and girls' self-reports indicated that bullying had decreased by half. These changes in behavior were more pronounced the longer the program was in effect. Moreover, students reported significant decreases in rates of truancy, vandalism, and theft and indicated that their school's climate was significantly more positive as a result of the program. Not surprisingly, those schools that had implemented more of the program's components experienced the most marked changes in behavior.

The core components of the Olweus antibullying program have been adapted for use in several other cultures, including Canada, England, and the United States. Results of the antibullying efforts in these countries have been similar to the results experienced in the Scandinavian countries, with the efforts in Toronto schools showing somewhat more modest results. Again, as in the Scandinavian study, schools that were more active in implementing the program observed the most marked changes in reported behaviors.

Bullying in the United States

Although there have been few studies of the prevalence of bullying among American schoolchildren, available data suggest that bullying is quite common in U.S. schools. In a study of 207 junior high and high school students from small midwestern towns, 88 percent reported having observed bullying, and 77 percent indicated that they had been victims of bullying during their school careers.[1] A study of 6,500 students in fourth to sixth grades in the rural South indicated that 1 in 4 students had been bullied with some regularity within the past 3 months and that 1 in 10 had been bullied at least once a week. Approximately one in five children admitted that they had bullied another child with some regularity in the previous 3 months.[2] These figures are consistent with estimates of several other researchers. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, bullying occurs more frequently on school grounds than on the way to and from school.[3]

Continued on next page

Consequences of Bullying

Studies of bullying suggest that there are short- and long-term consequences for both the perpetrators and victims of bullying. Students who are chronic victims of bullying experience more physical and psychological problems than their peers who are not harassed by other children[4] and they tend not to grow out of the role of victim. Longitudinal studies have found that victims of bullying in early grades also reported being bullied several years later.[5] Studies also suggest that chronically victimized students may as adults be at increased risk for depression, poor self-esteem, and other mental health problems,[6] including schizophrenia.[7]

It is not only victims who are at risk for short- and long-term problems; bullies also are at increased risk for negative outcomes. One researcher found that those elementary students who were bullies attended school less frequently and were more likely to drop out than other students.[8] Several studies suggest that bullying in early childhood may be a critical risk factor for the development of future problems with violence and delinquency. For example, Olweus' research found that in addition to threatening other children, bullies were several times more likely than their nonbullying peers to commit antisocial acts, including vandalism, fighting, theft, drunkenness, and truancy, and to have an arrest by young adulthood.[9] Another study of more than 500 children found that aggressive behavior at the age of 8 was a powerful predictor of criminality and violent behavior at the age of 30.[10]

Antibullying Initiative

Until recently, little attention has been given to the establishment of antibullying initiatives in U.S. schools. Within the past several years, a number of school-based programs have been developed to address bullying, although the degree to which they embrace a whole-school approach to the problem varies.

Only one U.S. program has been based explicitly on the comprehensive model developed by Olweus in Sweden and Norway. Through a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Gary B. Melton, Susan P. Limber, and colleagues at the Institute for Families in Society of the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, have adapted Olweus' model for use in rural middle schools in that State. Interventions are focused at the levels of the individual, classroom, school, and community at large. A comprehensive evaluation involving 6,500 children currently is under way to measure the effects of the program.

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For more information, contact Susan Limber, Assistant Director, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina, Carolina Plaza, Columbia, SC 29208, 803–737–3186.

Gangs

A significant factor contributing to a climate of fear and intimidation in schools is the presence of youth gangs in the community and at school. Based on a 1995 national survey of 4,000 local law enforcement agencies in urban, rural, and suburban areas, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that there are as many as 23,000 youth gangs in the United States with more than 660,000 members. The existence of youth gangs has been reported in all 50 States.[11]

The fear associated with gangs is related to such student-expressed concerns as the following:

- Fearing gang disruptions at school or in the neighborhood.
- Encountering gang members on the way to and from school.
- Anticipating violence from known gang members enrolled at school.
- Receiving specific threats or being harassed by gang members who stake out territory on school campuses or in neighborhoods.
- Facing peer pressure to join a gang.
- Being mistaken as a gang member during school or in neighborhood skirmishes between rival gangs.
- Feeling threatened by school/neighborhood graffiti displaying gang territorial claims.
- Perceiving an increased presence at school of firearms and other weapons related to gang activity.

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) is a program designed to reduce youth violence and gang membership through a curriculum taught by law enforcement officers to elementary and middle school students. G.R.E.A.T. students are given the opportunity to discover for themselves the ramifications of gang violence through structured exercises and interactive approaches to learning. Included in the curriculum are many optional and extended activities that reinforce classroom instruction. The law enforcement representatives and teachers work together to teach students to become responsible members of their communities, set goals for themselves, resist peer pressure, and resolve conflicts and problems.

Law enforcement officers become certified G.R.E.A.T. officers by attending either a 1- or 2-week training program, depending on their qualifications. The training is provided free of charge at locations around the country. G.R.E.A.T. has trained more than 2,700 officers since 1991. These officers deliver G.R.E.A.T. to students in more than 1,300 communities and on U.S. military bases around the world.

In 1995, under a grant from the National Institute of Justice, the University of Nebraska completed a cross-sectional survey of 5,935 eighth graders, 45 percent of whom had participated in the G.R.E.A.T. program; the rest were used as a comparison group. Preliminary results suggest that G.R.E.A.T. had a significant impact on changing the behavior of students. G.R.E.A.T. students exhibited more prosocial behaviors and attitudes than nonparticipants. They were more attached to their parents and to school. More of their friends were involved in nondelinquent activities, and G.R.E.A.T. students were more committed to these friends. Participants in the program reported that they were less involved in delinquent activity and fighting, were less likely to engage in impulsive or risk-taking behavior, were less likely to perceive blocks to their academic success, and expressed stronger antigang attitudes. However, these results reveal the program's effects after only 1 year. To measure long-term effects, the evaluation team implemented a quasi-experimental research design in which students were assigned to G.R.E.A.T. or non-G.R.E.A.T. classrooms. As part of this longitudinal study, students completed pre- and post-tests during fall 1995 and annual followup surveys in 1996 and 1997. Additional surveys are scheduled for 1998 and 1999.

For more information, contact Tom Schneider, Special Agent in Charge, G.R.E.A.T. Program Branch, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, P.O. Box 50418, Washington, DC 20091–0418, 800–726–7070, great@atfhq.atf.treas.gov, www.atf.treas.gov/great/great.htm; or State and Local Programs Division, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, National Center for State, Local, and International Law Enforcement Training, Building 67, Glynco, GA 31524, 912–267–2452.

- Experiencing alarm due to escalating interracial/ethnic tensions between gangs at school and in the community.

Public opinion supports the belief that gangs on school campuses are a major problem in communities across America. For example, in a survey of 700 communities nationwide, 40 percent of the suburban communities and nonmetropolitan towns and cities responding said gangs were a factor in the violence in their schools.[15]

In addition, the Gallup Organization, in conjunction with the *Phi Delta Kappan*, annually polls the public regarding its perception toward public schools. In the 1997 survey of persons 18 years and older, respondents reported that the four biggest problems for the public schools in their communities were lack of discipline; lack of financial support; use of drugs; and fighting, violence, and gangs.[16] The 1996 Twenty-Seventh Annual Survey of High Achievers sampled behavior trends, opinions, and attitudes of 16- to 18-year-old high school students who had A or B averages. Of the teenagers surveyed, 19 percent knew of the presence of gangs in their schools.[17]

Many teenagers are vulnerable to the lure of gangs. Membership in a gang is seen to confer a kind of identity that suggests "power, fearlessness, and domination," according to Albert Cohen in the foreword of *Gangs in America*.[18] Youth who perceive particular deficiencies in their lives often seek to compensate by joining gangs. Offers of a loyal support group of peers, who both understand and value each member in a way that parents and other relatives cannot, attract adolescents in the throes of self-doubt, uncertainty, and feelings of powerlessness. Beginning with gang initiation, however, intimidation and a new kind of fear that feeds on violent exploitation of others lead youth away from the mainstream and into byways and back alleys where weapons, drugs, delinquency, and crime replace schooling and responsible citizenship.

Increasingly, gang activity occurs when ethnic groups within a community develop "turf" rivalries, both in the community and on school campuses. Gang leaders usually command obedience from a loyal core of subordinates and from rank-and-file gang members. The key person in a gang often maintains authority through personal physical force and that of subordinates or by sheer force of personality. Some school administrators have found ways to defuse campus intercultural and gang conflicts by co-opting gang leaders and enlisting their considerable leadership talents in carrying out peaceful, prosocial school programs.[19]

In any case, if educators are to deal effectively with gang members on campus, they must remain vigilant yet innovative in exploring ways to advance school purposes and policies. The following list represents strategies that schools currently use to that end:

- Establishing ongoing professional development and inservice training programs for all school employees, including training techniques in classroom management and in dealing with cultural diversity, disruptive students and parents, and campus intruders.
- Conducting leadership training classes to assist students in developing insight and skills that enable them to work harmoniously with diverse individuals and groups.
- Offering classes incorporating curriculums on life skills and resistance to peer pressure, values clarification, and cultural sensitivity.
- Implementing dress codes designed to eliminate gang colors and clothing, publicizing the codes at school, and distributing them to all students and parents.
- Adopting school uniforms—particularly for elementary and middle school students—sometimes optional and sometimes mandated. Financial assistance should be available to parents who cannot afford uniforms.

- Reducing the length of time between classes to discourage loitering.
- Establishing partnership academies, schools-within-schools, alternative schools, beacon schools, in-school suspension programs, and school-to-work programs in collaboration with colleges and businesses in order to relocate and continue educating students with histories of classroom disruption, lack of motivation, and gang membership.
- Implementing victim/offender programs requiring juvenile offenders to make restitution to victims for damage or loss incurred or to perform community service.
- Creating a climate of ownership and school pride by including students, parents, teachers, and community leaders in the safe-school planning process.
- Staging regular campuswide graffiti and vandalism cleanup campaigns and cleanup rallies in response to specific incidents of defacement and destruction.
- Organizing crisis intervention teams to counsel students coping with troubling violence in and near school.
- Offering students, especially juvenile gang members, special outreach and afterschool programs as an alternative to gang membership.

Weapons

Carrying weapons to school has become an acceptable risk for many students, both those who are fearful and those who intend to exploit others. Underlying the reasons students bring weapons to school may be the societal attitude that violence is an effective way to deal with problems. Television and movies depict violence as an effective problem-solving technique used by "good guys" and "bad guys" alike. Regardless of whether weapons are used in an act of aggression or as a defense against another's aggression, the reason weapons are brought to school often is related to the proliferation of gangs and drug activity on or near many school campuses.

A weapon is any instrument used with intent to inflict physical or mental harm on another person. Although school officials are concerned with all weapons, knives, guns, and explosive devices present the greatest threat to school safety. Weapons have been found and used on school campuses nationwide. Of the 3,370 high school students surveyed in the 1996 Twenty-Seventh Annual Survey of High Achievers, 29 percent reported that they knew someone who had brought a weapon to school, and 17 percent claimed it was not very difficult to obtain weapons at school.[1] When looking at the prevalence of gun possession in particular, the 1995 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey found that 12.7 percent of student respondents knew someone who brought a gun to school.[2] According to the same study, the percentage of students reporting this increased as their age increased (see figure 1).

A periodic survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that nearly 12 percent of the polled students in grades 9 through 12 carried a weapon on school property during the 30 days preceding the survey, and 7.3 percent were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the 12 months preceding the survey.[3] In a study measuring school-associated violent deaths from 1992–1994, 77 percent of the deaths were due to firearms (see table 1).[4]

Startlingly, the cost of a death due to a single 22-cent, 9-millimeter bullet has been documented as including the following expenses: juvenile hall and jail costs for 1 year for four suspects, $85,710; a 2-week trial, $61,000; crime scene investigation, $13,438; medical treatment, $4,950; autopsy, $2,804; and State incarceration costs if the four suspects are convicted and serve 20 years, $1,796,625—for a grand total of $1,964,527.[5] Extrapolated costs in terms of lives cut short and loved ones' grief, lost potential and productivity, and resulting damage to the Nation's psyche and society are inestimable, but nonetheless real.

Examples of strategies being implemented to prevent or intervene in the use of weapons in schools include:

- Passage of State and local gun-free school zones legislation.
- Passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act in 1994, which states that students be expelled if found with a weapon at school.
- Public awareness campaigns, such as a Boston billboard nearly the length of a football field depicting the faces of children and other victims of gun violence, "the largest of 200 signs erected

Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach, a national program first implemented in 1991 by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA), connects local clubs with courts, police departments, schools, social service agencies, and other organizations in the community. Local Boys & Girls Clubs involved in this program identify and recruit at-risk and high-risk youth ages 6 to 18 years old into clubs in a nonstigmatizing way. The clubs also use direct outreach methods to approach youth in the community.

The program focuses on enhancing a youth's communication, problem-solving, and decisionmaking skills. Noting progress monthly, club professional staff help youth focus on specific developmental goals. These goals include staying in school and out of the court system, improving scholastically, bonding with positive adults, and more frequently participating in club events and activities.

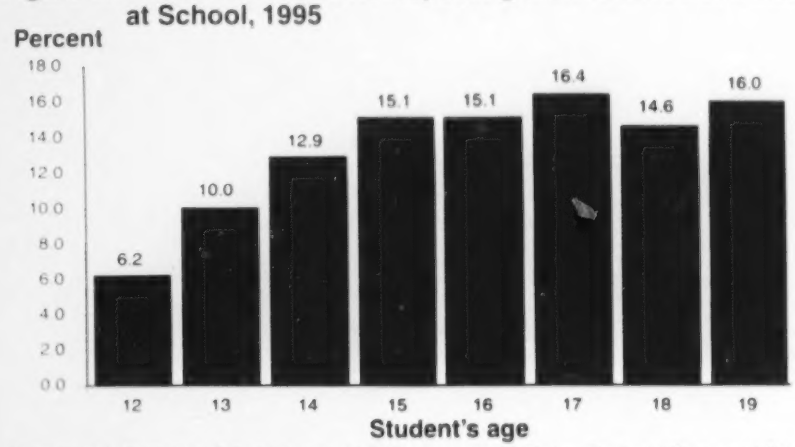
In fiscal year (FY) 1997, B&GCA provided training and technical assistance to 30 existing gang prevention and 3 intervention sites and expanded the gang prevention and intervention program to 23 additional clubs. In FY 1998, B&GCA will provide training and technical assistance to 22 new gang prevention sites, 3 new intervention sites, and selected OJJDP demonstration sites. More than 140 clubs have implemented Targeted Outreach since its inception. A previous process evaluation of the program found that once enrolled, 90 percent of the youth came to the club once a week or more, and 26 percent began to come in daily. Many youth who participated in club and civic activities received recognition for the amount and/or quality of their participation, and 48 percent improved their academic performance. A process and outcome evaluation has been funded by OJJDP and is currently being designed by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV).

For more information, contact Frank Sanchez, Jr., Director of Delinquency Prevention, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 1230 West Peachtree Street NW., Atlanta, GA 30309, 404–815–5763, 404–815–5789 (fax), fsanchez@bgca.org, www.bgca.org.

in the state to remind people of the costs of handgun violence."[25]

- Public service gifts and donations, such as the 350 free *In a Flash* videos and teaching aids designed to show the "lethal and injurious effects of gun violence" donated by the nonprofit National Emergency Medicine Association to public, private, and special education schools in the Baltimore area.[26]
- Hotlines, such as the one at George Washington High School in San Francisco,[27] used for the anonymous reporting of weapons, drug use and possession, bullying, harassment, and other school-associated violence and crime.
- Emphasis on "telling is not tattling" word-of-mouth campaigns to encourage students to break their informal code of silence and to report weapons and other instances of campus crime and violence that threaten safety.
- Use of handheld or permanent weapons detectors.
- Use of see-through book bags to prevent weapons concealment.
- Removal or permanent locking of hall lockers to prevent weapons concealment and to discourage loitering in hallways.
- Standardized incident-reporting forms for documenting all instances of school violence and crime, and requirement that schools report to police when a weapon is found in school.
- Implementation of a school resource officer program, such as Community Policing Within Schools in the Robeson County School Outreach Program, which places sworn officers in targeted high schools.[28]
- Partnerships with community agencies that enhance school resources and activities, such as coordinating campus security with local law enforcement agencies; orchestrating presentations from local fire and police departments regarding ways students and school personnel can assist in responding to school safety crises; and involving

Figure 1: Percent of Students Reporting the Presence of Guns at School, 1995



Source: K.A. Chandler, C.D. Chapman, M.R. Rand, and B.M. Taylor, *Students' Reports of School Crime: 1989 and 1995*, Washington, DC: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, p.10, March 1998.

Table 1: Characteristics of School-Associated Violent Deaths, 1992–1994

	Number	Percent
Type of fatality		
Interpersonal	85	80.9%
Self-inflicted	20	19.0
Time of fatal injury*		
During school activities	46	43.8
Classes	23	21.9
Break period	11	10.5
Afterschool activities	12	11.4
Before or after official activities	46	43.8
Day with no classes or activities	8	7.6
Location of fatal injury		
Elementary schools	31	29.5
Secondary schools	74	70.4
On campus	68	64.8
Classroom/hall	19	18.1
Other indoor area	12	11.4
Out of doors	37	35.2
Off campus	37	35.2

	Number	Percent
Type of community		
Rural	10	9.5%
Suburban	32	30.5
Urban	63	60.0
Method of injury		
Firearm	81	77.1
Knife or other blade	18	17.1
Rope	5	4.8
No weapon	1	1.0
Motive (more than one may apply)		
Interpersonal dispute	35	33.3
Gang-related activities	33	31.4
Random victim event	19	18.1
Suicide	19	18.1
Dispute over romantic relationship	12	11.4
Robbery or attempted robbery	10	9.5
Dispute over money or property	7	6.7
Drug-related activities	6	5.7
Unintentional	5	4.8

*Unknown or other=5 (4.8%)

Source: S.P. Kachur, G.M. Stennies, K.E. Powell, W. Modzeleski, R. Stephens, R. Murphy, M. Kresnow, D. Sleet, R. Lowry, "School-associated violent deaths in the United States, 1992–1994," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 275(22):1729–1733, 1996.

county mental health, child protective services, and juvenile probation agencies in identifying and monitoring potentially dangerous or law-violating students.

Substance Abuse

A fourth problem area that concerns educators, parents, law enforcement officials, legislators, and the public at large is the use and trafficking of drugs and alcohol in America's schools.

Recent survey by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A recent, comprehensive national survey of drug abuse in America was released August 6, 1997, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Based on a 1996 representative sample of the U.S. population ages 12 and older, including people who live in households and group quarters such as dormitories and homeless shelters, the report pictured "the bright and the dark side of drug use by adolescents." For the first time since 1992, illicit drug use by U.S. adolescents declined.[7]

The survey includes information on drug use, specifically revealing information on use of heroin, hallucinogens, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine and offering population breakdowns featuring youth ages 12 to 17 and 18 to 26.

While the rate of drug use among youth ages 12 to 17 fell from 10.9 percent in 1995 to 9.0 percent in 1996,[8] the survey indicated that in this age bracket, there was more first-time heroin use, increased use of hallucinogens, fewer teens who believed cocaine is harmful, and little change in cigarette smoking.[9] An estimated 62 million Americans were found to smoke, including 4.1 million adolescents ages 12 to 17. Smokers in this age bracket were found to be about 9 times as likely to use illicit drugs and 16 times as likely to drink heavily as nonsmoking youth.[10]

Annual survey by the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research conducts an annual survey that tracks the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs by 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in public and private schools in the continental United States. The Monitoring the Future Study, also known as the National High School Senior Survey, is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The 1997 survey results reveal a leveling off of most drug use following the steady rise in use since the beginning of the decade. Some survey results are discussed in more detail below.[11]

- **Seniors.** Of the approximately 16,000 seniors surveyed, 54 percent had used an illicit drug at least once in their lifetimes; more than one-fourth had used an illicit drug within the 30 days preceding their completion of the survey; one-eighth smoked half a pack of cigarettes or more daily; and more than half had used alcoholic beverages within the 30 days preceding completion of the survey.
- **Sophomores.** Of the approximately 16,000 sophomores surveyed, 47 percent had used an illicit drug at least once; 23 percent had used an illicit drug within the 30 days preceding completion of the survey; almost 9 percent smoked half a pack of cigarettes or more daily; and 40 percent had used alcoholic beverages within the 30 days preceding completion of the survey.
- **Eighth graders.** Of the approximately 19,000 eighth graders surveyed, 29 percent had used an illicit drug at least once; nearly 13 percent had used an illicit drug within the 30 days preceding the survey; 3.5 percent smoked half a pack of cigarettes or more daily; and 24.5 percent had used alcoholic beverages within the 30 days preceding the survey.

Not only are adults disturbed by this national epidemic, but students are also concerned. Regarding factors that contribute to violence against teens, three in five teens blamed drugs, according to a study sponsored by the National Crime

National Youth Gang Center

The proliferation of gang problems in large and small cities, suburbs, and even rural areas over the past two decades led to the development of a comprehensive, coordinated response to America's gang problem by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The OJJDP response involves five major components:

- Implementation and operation of the National Youth Gang Center.
- Demonstration of the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression in selected communities.
- An independent evaluation of the demonstration program.
- Training and technical assistance regarding community-wide responses to gangs.
- Targeted acquisition and dissemination of gang materials via the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse.

What's Its Purpose?

The National Youth Gang Center assists State and local communities in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies.

What Does the National Youth Gang Center Do?

The National Youth Gang Center:

- Identifies promising gang prevention and intervention program strategies.
- Analyzes gang-related legislation.
- Collects and analyzes statistical data on gangs.
- Collects and reviews gang literature.
- Coordinates activities of the Youth Gang Consortium, a collection of Federal, State, and local agency representatives who wish to ease gang program development, information exchange, and service delivery between agencies.

For more information, contact John Moore, Senior Research Associate, National Youth Gang Center, Institute for Intergovernmental Research, P.O. Box 12729, Tallahassee, FL 32317, 850–385–0600, nygc@iir.com, www.iir.com/nygc.

Safe Alternatives and Violence Education (SAVE) is a violence awareness education curriculum designed for 10- to 17-year-old students (and the parents of such students) who are found carrying a weapon on or near a school campus. The program was designed in 1993 in conjunction with a countywide effort to reduce weapon possession by youth, especially on school campuses. When a student is found in possession of a weapon on or near a school campus, the student and a parent are required to attend the SAVE program classes. Addressing the relationship between violence and the media, the realities of weapon possession, and the consequences of violence, the class is a one-time, 6-hour, interactive violence awareness curriculum offered year-round on Saturdays.

Referrals may be made by police agencies, juvenile court/probation officials, local schools, community agencies, or parents. Each SAVE class is staffed as needed by three police officers and a language translator. Program administration is handled by one full-time coordinator and a supervising sergeant. Several San Jose school districts use the SAVE program, either as an alternative to school expulsion or as a condition of suspension/expulsion.

In April 1997, the Center for Educational Planning, a division of the Santa Clara County Office of Education, published a program impact evaluation of SAVE. The evaluation reveals that almost 91 percent of the 372 students included in the study have had no subsequent weapons offenses after participating in the SAVE program. In addition, approximately 69 percent of the study participants have had no subsequent offenses of any type.

For more information, contact Suzan Stauffer, SAVE Coordinator, San Jose Police Department, 201 West Mission Street, San Jose, CA 95110, 408–277–4133.

Prevention Council (NCPC), the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law (NICEL), and OJJDP.[34] In the 1996 Twenty-Seventh Annual Survey of High Achievers, almost one-half of the responding students stated that drug dealing occurred at their schools and in American society, 20 percent blamed drugs for the level of violence in their schools, and one in three believed drugs and alcohol were the most serious problems facing their high schools, a percentage that had more than doubled since the previous year's survey.[35]

Perhaps one of the main reasons so many students report using alcohol and other drugs is their availability. Researchers for NCPC and NICEL interviewed 2,023 students in public, private, and parochial schools in grades 7 through 12 during the fall of 1995. Twenty-nine percent said that it was "very easy" to get illegal drugs in their neighborhoods and another 31 percent said that it was "somewhat easy or not very hard."[36]

Why do students regard alcohol and other drug use as one of the leading causes of violence on their campuses, and why does substance abuse trigger fear? Many students fear for the lives of their friends who have turned to alcohol and other drugs to cope with the problems, stress, or boredom they experience in their daily lives. Often it is violence—including extortion, theft, prostitution, or drug dealing—that supports their habitual substance abuse. Gangs who fight over their territorial rights to sell drugs on the street or on campus also engender fear. With the encroachment of the drug subculture onto school campuses, many young people fear that they may succumb to peer pressure and end up addicted to drugs, thereby subjecting themselves to physical, mental, and emotional harm; risking the loss of opportunities to succeed; and compromising their long-held goals.

Strategies used to counter the influence of drugs and drug users among students include the following:

- Declaring specified areas surrounding schools to be Drug-Free School Zones.
- Instituting educational programs at all school levels that teach students to resist drugs, for example, the Life Skills Training Program,[37] which teaches drug resistance, self-management, and general social skills; Project STAR,[38] which includes the involvement of the entire community, mass media efforts, and health policy change; and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.®),[39] which is currently taught in many elementary and middle schools.
- Developing a critical thinking curriculum, such as AdSmarts,[40] designed to teach students to examine and analyze the media's influence on consumption.
- Establishing cooperative programs such as the Adolescent Social Action Program (ASAP), in which trained college students team with middle and high school student volunteers; they visit hospitals and detention centers to learn about individuals' life experiences that led to substance abuse.
- Involving parents in learning about substance abuse through organizations such as the Parents Association to Neutralize Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Inc. (PANDAA).[41]
- Introducing TREND,[42] a national student-led organization begun at the 1987 National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, which encourages youth to become involved in their communities and schools and take a leadership role in advocating a drug-free lifestyle.

Violence in the Community

While bullies, gangs, weapons, and substance abuse all contribute to the fear experienced by many of today's students, violence in America's neighborhoods and communities cannot be overlooked. Notwithstanding the sometimes unfounded and overgeneralized fear and apprehension about violence among children and adults, often fueled by the media, violence in America is a legitimate concern for everyone. Likewise, research and statistics regarding juvenile victimization cannot be entirely discounted as mere media sensationalism.

For example, according to *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, a report released in 1997 by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics in Washington, D.C., almost 2.6 million youth ages 12 to 17 were victims of violent crimes in 1994. For this study, violent crimes were defined as simple and aggravated assault, rape, and robbery.[43] The Federal Interagency Forum fosters coordination and collaboration in the collection and reporting of Federal data on children and families, drawing on numerous data sources.

In 1995, high school seniors reported the following types of victimization at school: having something stolen (more than 41 percent); having property deliberately damaged (26 percent); being

threatened with a weapon (more than 15 percent); and being threatened without a weapon (more than 23 percent). Of these seniors, 4.7 percent had been injured with a weapon and 11.4 percent had been injured without a weapon.[4]

Many young people, aware of the dangers that exist within their communities and schools, feel compelled to make changes in their lifestyles. Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., conducted a survey for NCPC and NICEL, Between Hope and Fear: Teens Speak Out on Crime and the Community. Survey results were obtained from interviews of a nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 students in grades 7 through 12. The purpose of this 1995 survey was to focus on "the effect of the awareness and fear of violence and crime on young people and the loss of freedom that results."[5]

Of the students interviewed, 29 percent said that they worried about being victimized in a drive-by shooting, and 46 percent had made at least one change in daily routines because of concerns about personal safety and crime and violence in their communities. Following is a list of changes made in daily routines:

- Changed friends (22 percent).
- Avoided particular parks or playgrounds (20 percent).
- Changed the way they went to or from school (13 percent).
- Carried a weapon (e.g., bat, club, knife, gun) to protect themselves (12 percent).
- Got lower grades in school than they think they otherwise would have (12 percent).
- Stayed home from school or cut class (11 percent).
- Found someone to protect them (10 percent).
- Stopped attending a particular activity or sport (10 percent).

Approximately 1 in 8 students changed the way they went to and from school and more than 1 in 10 stayed home from school or cut class because of concerns about crime and violence in their communities. Such behavior reveals that many students fear for their personal safety while merely attempting to attend school.[6]

The roots of violence reach deep into society, tapping into such complex conditions as poverty, racism, joblessness, and hopelessness. Each epidemic of violence triggers "knee-jerk" calls for legislation and quick fixes. Often, however, little is done in the long run to change conditions that give rise to violent behaviors. It should be apparent that educators by themselves cannot carry out their mandate of educating children while trying to rid their schools and surrounding communities of violence. The National Association of School Boards of Education has pointed out, "A community problem necessitates community-wide solutions. What has been coined 'school violence' is nothing more than societal violence that has penetrated the schoolhouse walls."[7]

Community violence gives rise to subsets of associated violence that impact schools. The effects of campus violence can be devastating to both individual students and specific learning environments. Schools that lack effective discipline, respect for academic standards, and basic humanitarian values falter in their mission to provide safe and effective learning environments. Students who live in fear of violence, witness violent acts, or actually become victims of violence suffer an array of consequences ranging from personal injury and debilitating anxiety that interrupt the learning process to a pattern of absence and truancy that can lead to dropping out of school and delinquency. Such disassociation restricts individual options and limits the development of academic and life skills.

Listed below are some of the types of legislation and collaborative programs undertaken by national, State, and local

The Adolescent Social Action Program (ASAP) at the University of New Mexico (UNM) uses peer resistance and decisionmaking training to increase self-efficacy, social responsibility, and life skills. Youth participants engage in social action activities to address conditions that lead to high-risk behaviors, such as substance use and abuse, gangs, and violence. Preliminary research findings indicate a significant impact on the development of positive coping skills, the ability to influence others, and reduced rates in teen drinking behaviors.

For more than 14 years, ASAP has operated in more than 30 communities in New Mexico, including Native-American reservations and small, rural Hispanic communities. At the heart of ASAP is the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose model emphasizes listening, dialog, and action. Small groups of students are taken on supervised visits to a local or regional hospital (three visits), a detention center (one visit), and the Metro court (one visit). The students interview the patients and inmates and listen to their stories. Then, using critical thinking strategies, they examine the consequences of the patients' and inmates' actions through dialogs led by trained graduate and undergraduate university facilitators and reflect on their own lives.

ASAP staff also conduct and develop local and national training for teachers, community groups, and health professionals on empowerment-based education, peer education, and working with youth.

For more information, contact Lily Dow, Adolescent Social Action Program, Family Practice Building, Third Floor, 2400 Tucker NE., Albuquerque, NM 87131–5241, 888–738–2940, 505–272–5532, 505–272–4494 (fax).

agencies working in partnership that are producing positive results in reestablishing schools as safe havens for learning:

- Nearly all States have developed some sort of crime-free, weapon-free, or safe-school zone statute. Most States have defined the zones also to include school transportation and locations of school-sponsored functions.
- The above statutes have given rise to zero-tolerance policies for such things as weapons and drugs. These policies are enforced by school districts and individual schools, often with support from local police forces or school-based resource officers.
- Federal regulations established in 1994 mandate that all school districts set up programs to test school bus drivers for drug and alcohol use.[18]
- Schools are forging partnerships with court officials, probation officers, and other youth-serving professionals to share information on and monitor students who have criminal records or who are in aftercare programs following their terms of incarceration in juvenile justice facilities.[19]
- School districts are formulating crisis prevention/intervention policies and are directing individual schools to develop such policies and individual safe-school plans.
- School districts, in response to local needs, have stepped up efforts to improve school security by installing security aids or devices and providing services such as:
  - Completing criminal background checks on teachers and school staff members before a work assignment is made.
  - Establishing Neighborhood Watch programs in areas near schools.
  - Recruiting parents to provide safe houses along school routes and to monitor "safe corridors" or walkways to and from school.
  - Enlisting parent volunteers to monitor hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, and school walkways in order to increase visibility of responsible adults.
  - Creating block safety watch programs carried out by area residents at school bus stops as a crime deterrent for school children and area residents.
  - Fencing school grounds to secure campus perimeters.
  - Replacing bathroom doors with zigzag entrances, to make it easier to monitor sounds, and installing roll-down doors to secure bathrooms after hours.
  - Designating one main door entry to school, equipping exits with push bars, and locking all other doors to outside entry.
  - Installing bulletproof windows.
  - Equipping the school with closed-circuit video surveillance systems to reduce property crime such as break-ins, theft, vandalism, and assaults.
  - Designing landscaping to create an inviting appearance without offering a hiding place for trespassers or criminals.
  - Installing motion-sensitive lights to illuminate dark corners in hallways or on campus.
  - Mounting convex mirrors to monitor blind spots in school hallways.
  - Equipping classrooms with intercom systems connected to the central school office.
  - Issuing two-way radios to security patrols or campus staff members.
  - Purchasing cellular phones for use in crises or emergency situations.
  - Requiring photo identification badges for students, teachers, and staff and identification cards for visitors on campus.

Parents and Schools Succeeding in Providing Organized Routes to Travel (PASSPORT) is a joint effort of the Visalia Unified School District, Visalia Police Department, parents, and community-based organizations. The California program provides supervised routes for students to use when traveling to and from school in high-crime or gang-oriented areas. Parents receive a letter and map that indicate recommended travel routes.

Parent volunteers stand in front of their homes and "just watch" during specified hours. Fights, intimidating behaviors, or unsafe activities are immediately reported to the nearest school or to other appropriate agencies. While on duty, parents wear badges bearing the school name and district logo; the back of the badge lists phone numbers for the school, the district student services office, confidential hotlines, and the gang suppression unit. Participating businesses along the route display bright yellow signs in their windows. These businesses have agreed to allow students to use the phone if they are threatened or intimidated. Students may remain at the business location until their parents pick them up.

School administrators and the safe school coordinator routinely monitor and walk the PASSPORT routes, and the police department regularly patrols the PASSPORT communities and routes. Media publicity about PASSPORT encourages all citizens to watch over schoolchildren to ensure their safe passage to and from school. The program depends on cooperative, volunteer efforts; actual dollar costs are minimal.

For more information, contact Ralph Lomeli, Safe Schools Coordinator, Visalia Unified School District, 315 East Acequia, Visalia, CA 93291, 209–730–7579.

Creating Safer Schools

During the past decade in America, educational opportunity has gradually eroded in the Nation's schools. That opportunity has been undermined by violence and the fear of violence. Yet the Nation's basic precepts are intact: to provide educational opportunity, foster individual accomplishment in a diverse society, and preserve guaranteed rights and freedoms for all citizens.

Numerous prevention and intervention strategies have been outlined here, each developed to ensure that the Nation's schools are able to educate children in safe environments and that all youth have the opportunity to learn, grow, and mature as socially responsible citizens.

Although these strategies are a good starting point, more such interventions are needed. Through the efforts of educators, law enforcement officials, and parents—working in concert to implement these strategies and continuing to test new ones—it is possible to reduce the violence found in today's schools and create safe schools in every community.

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Gang Resistence Is Paramount (G.R.I.P.)

In an attempt to curb gang membership and discourage future gang involvement, the city of Paramount, CA, initiated the G.R.I.P. program, formerly known as Alternatives to Gang Membership, which combines the resources of families, schools, and local government. The program attempts to discourage future gang membership by teaching children the harmful consequences of this lifestyle and by persuading them to choose positive alternatives.

Initiated in 1982, the program includes three major components. The first involves neighborhood meetings that provide parents with support, assistance, and resources as they try to prevent their children from joining gangs. These meetings, conducted in both English and Spanish, often use audiovisual materials and focus on educating parents about gang activity, increasing family involvement, supporting sports and recreation programs, and increasing neighborhood unity to combat gang proliferation.

The second component comprises a 15-week course for fifth grade students and a 10-week course for second grade students. The lessons deal with graffiti, peer pressure, tattoos, the impact of gang activity on family members, drug abuse, and alternative activities and opportunities.

Finally, a school-based followup program is implemented at the ninth grade level to reinforce what children learned in the elementary grades. The program builds self-esteem and also focuses on the consequences of a criminal lifestyle, the benefits of higher education, and future career opportunities.

This program has undergone five separate studies. The first tested elementary students before and after participation in the program. Prior to participation, 50 percent were undecided about gang involvement, but after participation, 90 percent responded negatively toward gangs. The second study, also using a pre/post design, replicated the results of the first. However, this study included a control group that was not exposed to the program; this group showed no change in their attitudes (50 percent undecided) over the same period of time. The third and fourth studies surveyed seventh and ninth graders, respectively, who had participated in the fifth grade program; 90 percent (from both studies) indicated that they still had negative attitudes about gangs or stayed out of them. The final study cross-checked the names of 3,612 former program participants with local police records and found that 96 percent were not identified as gang members.

For more information, contact Tony Ostos, Neighborhood Counseling Manager, G.R.I.P., 16400 Colorado Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723–5050, 562–220–2140.

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